



Bureau of Home Furnishings & Thermal Insulation

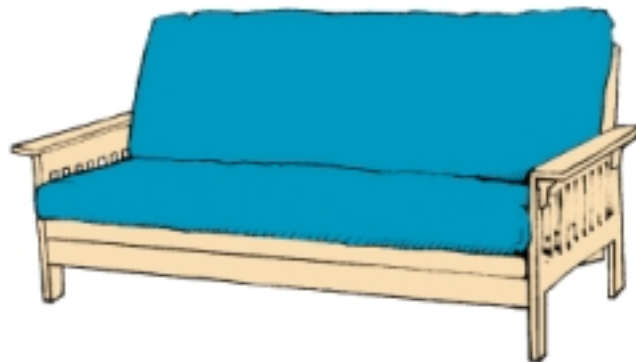
Futons & Flammability

JULY 2002

CONSUMER INFORMATION SHEET

What is a futon?

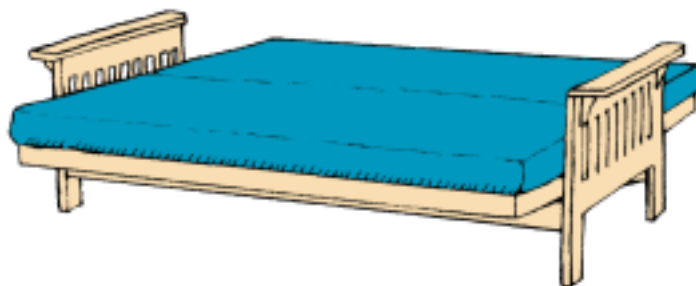
The word *futon* comes from the English spelling for a Japanese-style bed known as a “shikibuton,” or floor mat, and a “kakebuton,” or comforter. The first futon introduced into American culture was constructed of a simple cotton mattress that could be placed directly on the floor and easily folded to save space. Since then, in the American bedding industry, futons have evolved to a dual-purpose seating and bedding product that offers an alternative to the traditional sofa bed.



CAUTION!

Futons are not fireproof . . .

Today's version of the futon usually has a frame, cover, and mattress that may contain cotton batting, synthetic batting or polyurethane foam padding — materials that *may catch fire* if touched by a cigarette, match, lighter, or other open flame.



. . . but they must be smolder-resistant.

Fortunately, in California, the Department of Consumer Affairs' Bureau of Home Furnishings and Thermal Insulation regulates the futon industry for compliance with state and federal flammability and labeling requirements. Under California law, dual-purpose (bedding/upholstered) furniture items offered for sale to the general public must be designed to *resist* combustion from a smoldering cigarette. In addition, polyurethane foam padding, cotton batting, and other fillings used in futons or upholstered furniture must be flame retardant and smolder resistant, when tested separately. Futon mattresses that meet these requirements carry a *flammability label*. **Be sure the futon you buy has one.**

NOTICE

THIS ARTICLE MEETS THE FLAMMABILITY REQUIREMENTS OF CALIFORNIA BUREAU OF HOME FURNISHINGS TECHNICAL BULLETIN 117. CARE SHOULD BE EXERCISED NEAR OPEN FLAME OR WITH BURNING CIGARETTES.

Flammability Label

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The law label shows you other significant information.

A *law label* must be attached to every futon sold in California. The law label shows the following information:

- (a) A generic description of the concealed filling or cushioning materials inside the futon.
- (b) The manufacturer's registry number. The Bureau assigns a number to every licensed manufacturer. A list of all licensed manufacturers is maintained by the Bureau.
- (c) A certification statement by the manufacturer that the futon was manufactured in accordance with the requirements of law.

Removing the labels. The consumer may remove any labels after the product is purchased. However, it is a good idea to save the labels in case you have a problem with the futon in the future.

Make sure the futon retailer has a valid license issued by the Bureau.

The Bureau licenses futon manufacturers and retailers and enforces California statutes and regulations governing the furniture, bedding, and thermal insulation industries. Bureau inspectors routinely inspect futon makers and sellers throughout the state for product compliance with the law, e.g., product flammability, labeling, and appropriate licensing. Futons manufactured outside of the state are still subject to California law if they are offered for sale in California. If a futon is found not to be in compliance with the law, the licensee offering it for sale is subject to a statewide Withhold-from-Sale action and an Administrative Citation. Violators may be fined up to \$2,500 for each violation.

The law requires futon retailers to be licensed by the Bureau and to post the licenses in their places of business. You can also check a license online at www.dca.ca.gov. Licensed retailers are specifically responsible to:

- (a) ensure that any article they sell is correctly labeled;
- (b) fully comply with the Bureau's regulations governing false and misleading advertising; and
- (c) ensure that all *manufacturers* from whom they purchase products hold valid licenses with the Bureau.

If you have a concern about the product you purchased . . . First, talk to the business manager or owner of the store where you purchased the product and try to resolve the problem directly. State your position clearly and keep a written log of your conversations and copies of correspondence with the business. If you still cannot resolve the problem, you may file a complaint with the Department of Consumer Affairs. Start the process online by visiting the Department's Web site www.dca.ca.gov, or call the Consumer Information Center toll-free at **1-800-952-5210** and request a complaint form. The Department may attempt to mediate the dispute or, if a violation of laws or regulations is found, may take disciplinary action against the licensee.

If you have questions about futon flammability or labeling, contact:

Bureau of Home Furnishings and Thermal Insulation
3485 Orange Grove Ave., North Highlands, CA 95660-5595 ● (916) 574-2041

(Space for Stitching)	
UNDER PENALTY OF LAW THIS TAG NOT TO BE REMOVED EXCEPT BY THE CONSUMER.	
ALL NEW MATERIAL consisting of	
Blended Cotton Batting	XXX
Polyurethane Foam Pad	XXX
Finished	Net Wt. of Filling
Size <u>xx</u> inches	Mat'l <u>xx</u> pounds
	Registry No. CA-XXXX
	Certification is made by the manufacturer that the materials in this article are described in accordance with law.
Name and address of vendor or manufacturer	

Law Label